

[From Bed Bug Handbook: The Complete Guide to Bed Bugs and Their Control. L. J. Pinto, R. Cooper, and S. K. Kraft. 2007. Pinto & Associates, Inc.]

## **SCHOOLS**

*Schools are most vulnerable to bed bugs when students or staff introduce them from infestations that are occurring in their homes. The introduction of bed bugs into a school setting poses some interesting challenges regarding the methods that will be used to respond to the infestation. The use of pesticides in schools is frowned upon and in many states legislation has been passed mandating school IPM (Integrated Pest Management) that stresses chemical usage as a last resort in resolving pest problems. Unlike a residential setting, bed bug activity in most schools will be much less predictable due to the fact that there are no sleeping areas where the bugs will be concentrated. For boarding schools you should also refer to the dormitory checklists for recommendations that relate to residential style living conditions. This checklist is intended to be a guideline and should not be viewed as a comprehensive list of all of the actions that could or should be taken.*

### **Be Proactive**

- ☐ Develop a “bed bug action plan” in advance for dealing with a bed bug infestation.
  - ☐ If the school operates under an IPM program, the action plan should be consistent with the program’s practices and policies.
- ☐ Implement an education program for the entire school community (students, parents or guardians, all school staff, and parent teacher organizations) about bed bugs with meetings, handouts, websites, and other educational methods.
- ☐ Include bed bug educational materials in new student and new staff packets.
- ☐ If bed bugs are introduced on an ongoing basis consider the following actions:
  - ☐ Map out areas where bed bugs have been reported and look for trends to identify students or staff that may be introducing the bed bugs into the school. Offer guidance to staff and families regarding the effective management of bed bugs in their homes.
  - ☐ Inspect and monitor areas of historical bed bug activity, and areas at increased risk of bed bug introduction.
  - ☐ Consider using canine scent detection periodically to identify low-level bed bug activity in desks, chairs, closets, and lockers.
  - ☐ Install a dryer dedicated to back packs, sweatshirts, jackets and other launderable items that are suspected of being infested with bed bugs.

## **Education and Staff Training**

- ❑ Educate the entire school community on the following:
  - That bed bugs have become a common problem throughout the United States.
  - Where bed bugs come from.
  - How bed bugs are introduced and spread in schools.
  - What is being done to reduce the likelihood of experiencing a bed bug infestation.
  - Who to contact if they have questions regarding bed bugs.
  - How to prevent bed bugs.
  - How to identify the signs of bed bug infestation.
  - What steps to take if an infestation of bed bugs is suspected at home or in school.
  - The role of clutter in bed bug infestations.
  - What they can do to help prevent infestations from being introduced into the school.
- ❑ Educate teachers, school nurse, guidance counselors and other critical staff:
  - How to recognize symptoms that are characteristic of bed bug bites.
  - How to identify the signs of bed bug infestation.
  - What steps to take immediately upon learning of an infestation.
  - How to assist the pest control contractor during service.
  - How to maintain records of complaints, inspections, and service.
  - How parents are to be notified of a confirmed bed bug outbreak.
- ❑ Educate custodial and maintenance staff on the following:
  - The role of clutter in bed bug infestations.
  - How bed bugs are spread to other areas in the school.
  - How to assist the pest control contractor during service.
  - Actions that can be taken to reduce bed bugs in the school environment.
- ❑ Educate pest management staff on the following:
  - If your institution uses in-house pest control services, the technicians need to be up-to-date on bed bugs and their control. If they are not, facilities management should consider (1) hiring a pest control consultant to advise and train staff, or (2) contracting for bed bug service with an experienced pest control company.
  - If your institution uses a pest control contractor, educate them on the constraints on pesticide use, notification, posting and other IPM issues

specific to the school. Make sure they can work in compliance with IPM policies and practices.

### Responding to a Bed Bug Incident

- ❑ If you receive a complaint about bed bugs, get samples of the insect whenever possible for positive identification by a qualified professional.
  - The samples should be placed in a sealed container in rubbing alcohol to prevent escape and insure that the insects are dead.
  - An alternative method, but one that does not insure that the bugs will not escape, is to collect them on a piece of tape and then stick the tape on a piece of paper. Samples collected this way should be double bagged and sealed tightly.
- ❑ If you receive a complaint about bed bugs, even if it is not confirmed, arrange for a professional inspection to be conducted as quickly as possible.
  - Have the inspector confirm if visible evidence of bed bugs exists.
  - Have the inspector determine if it appears that this is a new or a well-established infestation.
  - Have the inspector confirm that the species present is in fact the bed bug, *Cimex lectularius*, and not a related species such as a bat bug, which would require a different control strategy.
- ❑ Interview students and staff in an effort to identify individuals that are suffering from a bed bug infestation at home. If the individual(s) responsible for introducing bed bugs can be identified, consider doing one or more of the following:
  - Offer guidance to students or staff suffering from bed bug infestations.
  - Provide literature and fact sheets.
  - Communicate the importance of eliminating the bed bug infestations at home.
  - Provide information on how to control bed bugs in the home and how to select a pest management company.
  - Communicate the importance of inspecting belongings that come into school (back packs, brief cases, purses, clothing, etc.).
  - Clothing, back packs and other items should be inspected in a discrete fashion by a trained individual (school nurse) prior to entering classrooms.
  - Consider regularly inspecting these individuals' lockers and other classrooms, lounges, school bus, etc. that they commonly use.

- These individual(s) should be encouraged to limit the number of items that they bring to school.
- These individual(s) should be encouraged to store all items that they carry back and forth between home and school inside a sealed container and away from their bed and any upholstered furniture.
- ❑ Control measures, particularly in classrooms, should avoid the use of pesticides and should focus on the physical removal or destruction of bed bugs using methods that include:
  - Intensive cleaning of infested rooms.
  - Reducing clutter and removing any unnecessary personal belongings or items from rooms.
  - Applying double-sided sticky tape on legs of chairs or desks to capture migrating bugs.
  - Removing bugs and eggs with a vacuum cleaner.
  - Steam treating bugs and eggs.
  - Heat treating furniture or other items from infested rooms.
  - Inspecting and monitoring rooms for at least two months after the last bed bug sighting or report of bed bug bites.
- ❑ Be sure that any pesticide applications are carried out in a manner that is consistent with school IPM regulations that may exist in your city, state or school district.
- ❑ Even if school IPM mandates or policies are not in place, insecticide applications should be carried out in a manner that is consistent with the IPM philosophy:
  - Make every effort to limit insecticide applications to low impact products such as silica gel, diatomaceous earth, and EPA-exempt products.
  - Use formulations and methods of application that minimize exposure to pesticides.
  - Never make applications when students are present.
  - Make certain that the products are labeled for use in schools and school classrooms and that all re-entry intervals have been met.
- ❑ Avoid storing jackets, back packs or other personal items where they are in contact with other students' belongings.
- ❑ Seal or caulk cracks and crevices in lockers, desks, baseboards, moldings, and around heating and A/C units; seal openings around pipe chases, conduits, etc. in areas where bed bugs have been reported.
- ❑ All areas that have been serviced for bed bugs should be inspected and monitored until no more bugs have been seen for two to three months.

- ☐ There should be routine inspections of desks, lockers, coat closets and other areas used by individuals thought to have infestations of bed bugs at home.
- ☐ If widespread infestations exist consider tracking infestations on floor plans:
  - ☐ Color-code floor plans based upon level of infestation.
  - ☐ Determine where the utility lines are installed and the directions they run and evaluate if the lines correlate with the spread of infestations.
  - ☐ Consider using canine scent detection as one tool to locate low-level infestations and to help confirm when bed bugs have been eliminated.
- ☐ Accurately document all of the actions taken to identify, control, and prevent bed bugs; this applies to the school as well as to the pest control company.